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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to identify and describe programmatic variables contributing to effective, successful, and innovative vocational education programs in Southeastern correctional institutions. Study sites were selected according to how effectively they promoted in-program success and post-release employment. Data was collected through interviews in twenty-one Southeastern adult and juvenile correctional institutions with program directors, participants (inmates/offenders), instructors, employers, and wardens/superintendents. Variables found to contribute to and to be correlated with successful programs were course development, instruction, inmate characteristics/perceptions, facilities/equipment, instructor characteristics, evaluation, agency cooperation, in-take and release procedures, policy, and support services. Several findings concerning program success were (1) that exemplary programs utilized systems of course and program development which were coordinated with other agencies and employed quantitative data for determining program modification; (2) that instructional methods found to contribute to successful programs included individualized instruction, "live" work and "hands-on" experience, and multi-media classroom instruction; and (3) that the majority of programs utilized support services to supplement their regular instructional programs, e.g., psychological and vocational counseling, tutoring, job placement services. (The key variables checklist is appended.) (CSS)

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Final Report

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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS: STATE-OF-THE-ART ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMS IN REGION IV.

Volume II

Keys for Improving Your Vocational Program:
A Review of Exemplary Vocational Programs in
Southeastern Correctional Institutions

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June 1978

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Specifications for this research project originated in the Fiscal Year 1976 Research Program of the Office of Education in the form of the Part C Vocational Education Research Program. Personnel in the Research Branch, Division of Research and Demonstration, Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education, U.S. Office of Education, are acknowledged for their assistance. Ms. Velma Brawner and Dr. Jack Wilson provided many helpful suggestions to the project during its beginning. Dr. Paul Manchak, assigned as Project Officer during the course of the project, was supportive and helpful, especially in working through several key decisions that had to be made during the project period.

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INTRODUCTION

The populations housed in correctional institutions have been neglected too often as a foci for research activity, particularly in the area of vocational education. This situation exists in spite of the thousands of persons who are released from federal and state prisons each year, relatively few of whom have received the kind of training while in prison that would enable them to compete successfully for jobs. Further, this training gap continues in spite of the belief that the greatest aid to rehabilitation and the reduction of recidivism is education, particularly vocational education.

This is not to imply that there is an absence of successful, effective and/or innovative vocational education programs in correctional institutions. Rather, it simply points up a situation that can be characterized as one of (a) too few programs and opportunities; (b) too little systematic attention toward identifying, describing and analyzing the variables that combine to create successful, effective and/or innovative vocational programs; and (c) too little shared information about effective and/or innovative vocational education programs among practitioners.

PURPOSE

This paper reports the findings of a systematic investigation of exemplary correctional vocational programs. The investigation was directed toward identifying and describing some of the programmatic variables that contribute to effective, successful and innovative vocational education programs in Southeastern correctional institutions. Effective, successful and innovative programs were defined as programs that impacted on participants in ways that facilitated a high degree of in-program success as well as a high degree of post-release employment. Efforts were made to isolate and briefly describe the critical generic programmatic variables that contributed to and/or were correlated with successful training and that had potential for transportability to other programs in other institutions.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The data were collected through a series of individual and guided group interviews in 21 Southeastern correctional institutions. Information was gathered from the program director of each exemplary program, from program participants (inmates/offenders), from instructors, from employers and from the institutional wardens/superintendents. The visits were conducted by two-person teams of experienced vocational education researchers and were of one or two days duration.

Sites were selected through a nomination process that involved state officials of adult corrections, youth services and vocational education. Officials were asked to nominate the three vocational programs at the adult level and the three vocational programs at the juvenile level that they considered to be the most effective, successful and/or innovative programs. Effective, successful and/or innovative was selected as the operational definition of exemplary because of the project's emphasis on examining and developing information pertaining to the most critical generic variables and the project's concern for potential transportability of ideas to other institutional settings.

Nominations were cross-referenced and scored according to rank; programs with the highest nomination scores were selected for visitation. Staff attempted to stratify nominations by level of security in order to assure a mix of maximum, medium and minimum security sites. However, differing state definitions of grades of security coupled with "topping-off" programs that mixed grades of security, rendered this stratification less useful than was anticipated.

A typical visit consisted of an interview with the program director, a guided group interview with vocational instructors, a series of individual student interviews, limited numbers of phone surveys with designated employers and a discussion with the institutional superintendent or warden. Concern was focused on local, day-to-day problems, ideas and solutions in order to produce data that would be of use to practitioners throughout the region as well as the nation.

APPROACH

This document is divided into a number of sections, each one of which is devoted to a variable that, when utilized in a particular manner, was identified as a major contributing factor to the effectiveness of vocational education in correctional institutions. The topics of consideration include: (a) course development, (b) instruction, (c) inmate characteristics/perceptions, (d) facilities/equipment, (e) instructor characteristics, (f) evaluation, (g) agency cooperation, (h) in-take and release procedures, (i) policy, and (j) support services. Particularly effective procedures in each of these areas are discussed; however, due to the quasi case study approach and the limited number of sites visited, the relative importance of different variables as compared to each other could not be determined. Nevertheless, the narrative is suggestive of effective mixes of the different variables, using operational examples.

The report contains information concerning both juvenile and adult correctional programs. Differences in perspective, approach and/or mandate are noted between juvenile and adult programs where applicable. However, it is the considered judgment of the authors that most techniques are potentially useful with only minor modifications for both adult and juvenile programs.

TOPICS/VARIABLES FOR CONSIDERATION

Course Development

Exemplary programs were found to utilize systems of course and program development which (1) were coordinated with other agencies and (2) employed quantitative data upon which to base decisions of program initiation, expansion and/or elimination. The most effective strategies matched program development with manpower needs, external training programs and participant interest.

Methods or techniques of course development that coincided with local and state employment needs and practices were found to contribute to high

rates of post-release employment and were believed to function as a significant factor in boosting the morale of program participants. Approximately half of the adult and half of the juvenile exemplary programs coordinated the development of their vocational programs with potential state, regional or local employment possibilities. Program directors for many programs that did not feature such coordination indicated a need for and interest in initiating this type of system.

Approximately 80% of the exemplary adult programs and 20% of the exemplary juvenile programs coordinated program development with the public school systems at either the secondary or postsecondary level. While educational coordination was perceived as a slightly less critical need than congruence with manpower needs, both planning procedures served to provide work and training continuity to recently released inmates that facilitated their reintegration into society.

The most elaborate planning system that utilized employment projections was a computerized system through which demands for additional training manpower by specific occupation and by geographic area within the state were determined with a reasonable degree of accuracy. However, less elaborate systems that utilized available manpower projections from the State Employment Security Commission to determine local, regional and state employment needs also worked efficiently.

Other course and program development techniques utilized participant interest as a factor in determining initiation and termination of courses. Some of the more effective programs combined participant information with manpower needs in the planning of courses. This planning procedure involved several steps. For example, initial preference for training slots was reserved for interested individuals whose home areas were located in the geographic area in which the employment need existed, and who were housed in facilities within the geographic area of need. Thus, an upholstery program (a) was based on a justified manpower need; (b) was housed in a correctional institution located in a geographic region in which the manpower need existed; and (c) enrolled inmates/offenders who

expressed/demonstrated interest in the program whose home area was located in the geographic area in which the manpower need existed. These factors combined to facilitate increased levels of post-release employment.

The coordination with manpower need estimates, participant interest and continuing training possibilities was beneficial, not only for program planning but also to program revision. In a number of effective programs, changing manpower needs were reviewed in determining whether to continue or discontinue ongoing training courses and programs. Such review was especially critical if the particular course ceased to attract a sufficient number of trainees, had an excessively high dropout rate or had an excessively low percentage of graduates who entered the occupation for which they were trained. This procedure was found to be a particularly efficient way of assisting the planning process for program development.

Instruction

Methods of instruction were found to be factors that contributed to successful programs. Of special note were programs of individualized instruction.

Most exemplary programs at the adult and juvenile levels shared the common denominator of utilizing individualized instruction for program participants. Over 85% of the instructors who taught in surveyed exemplary programs maintained that they utilized elements of an individualized instructional method as their primary instructional methodology.

The term "individualized instruction" has taken on so many connotations that attempting to define it has become a matter of semantics. Despite this confusion, certain key elements of individualized instructional programs as utilized in exemplary programs were identified, including the following:

- 1) Each trainee was allowed to progress through their curricular materials at their own pace; progress was based on individual mastery of materials.
- 2) When trainees needed assistance, they worked individually with the instructor or another designated "resource" person in a tutorial situation.

- 3) Expectations were clearly articulated for each trainee in terms of: (a) the nature of the learning task and required demonstration of skills; (b) the time constraints; (c) the required degree of accuracy/proficiency that must be demonstrated for credit; and (d) the conditions under which the demonstration must occur.
- 4) Each trainee was tested only when they were prepared; thus, students progressed at different levels. This required testing at different intervals and working on different materials with different levels of mastery.
- 5) There were individualized training plans for each student.
- 6) In addition, many programs included support services, resources and remedial activities to assist each trainee with their entire range of learning needs.

In a number of instances, the development and use of individualized training programs was an institutional rather than a programmatic directive. Several of these programs, located in juvenile institutions, featured special support personnel who assisted in developing each trainee's program. The program included specific standards that had to be achieved before the trainee was allowed to leave. In other instances, such programs were developed as contracts that outlined expectations and requirements for both the individual and the institution. In some situations, a comprehensive individual needs assessment and a personalized remedial program were also established for each trainee. This latter type program, along with individualized class work, included field trips, camping and hiking trips, community improvement projects, recreational activities, and pre-vocational training.

As testimony to the increasing efficacy of the individualized instructional approach, instructors identified the lack of individualized materials as the greatest instructional problem they encountered while teaching in a correctional setting.

A number of programs used individualized instructional techniques in conjunction with other instructional methods. One particularly effective combination utilized the "live" work method. Live work instruction occurred in those instances when students applied skills learned in class to some "production" activity associated with the institution. Examples

throughout the visited institutions included the construction of fire stations and farm buildings, and the general assistance to other projects on which trainees applied their acquired skills toward institutional improvement.

Closely related to the live work experiences were other "hands-on" training activities. These experiences, unlike the "live" work experiences, were conducted within the confines of the training class and area; still, they offered considerable advancement over classroom instruction in that trainees were able to work on actual products. For example, "hands-on" experiences occurred when students in an auto mechanics class were able to apply their training to an automobile rather than a shop model engine. Almost all exemplary programs utilized this technique. Its importance was verified through conversations with employers. In their opinion, job success often depended on the amount of "hands-on" experience a student had acquired before release from the correctional institution.

In addition to the instructional methodologies of individualized instruction, "live" work experiences and "hands-on" opportunities, most exemplary programs used classroom instructional activities as a component of their training program. These classroom activities combined a series of techniques including lecture, use of self-pacing texts and audio-visual materials to convey information. Approximately two-thirds of the instructors of exemplary programs reported that such techniques were usually included in their training program. Several programs even produced their own audio-visual as well as self-instructional curricular materials.

In summary, a series of instructional methods was found to contribute to successful programs. In order of perceived importance, these included (a) individualized instruction, (b) "live" work and "hands-on" experience, and (c) classroom instruction that employed multi-media approaches. Many successful programs used combinations of all three techniques.

Support Services

The vast majority of exemplary programs utilized support services to supplement their regular instructional programs. Among the various types of utilized support services were psychological and vocational counseling, remedial resource support, tutoring, community service agency assistance, and job placement services.

The counseling programs included testing/diagnostic programs, individual personal counseling and decision-making. Over half of the exemplary programs and virtually all of the juvenile level programs utilized some combination of these counseling services. The most comprehensive programs included a trainee diagnosis and evaluation program that addressed the following factors, in addition to personal considerations:

- 1) Work factors: What are the student's assets concerning coordination, dexterity, perception and familiarity with machines, tools, and equipment?
- 2) Work behaviors: How can the student be expected to behave with regard to conformity to work rules and regulations, reactions to assigned work, interpersonal traits, and initiative factors?
- 3) Work temperaments: What are the student's attitudes toward dealing with people, performing tasks, ability to make judgments and decisions, and planning and carrying out entire tasks?
- 4) Work conditions: How will the student react to being inside or outside, extreme cold or heat, noise and vibration, dry and humid extremes, hazards such as heights or electricity, and fumes, odors and toxic conditions?
- 5) Physical demands: How will the student react to lifting, climbing, seeing and hearing?

Among the standardized measures useful to derive such information are the California Occupational Preference System, the Geist Picture Interest Inventory, the General Aptitude Test Battery, the CMI, and the Singer Career Systems.

Information from such diagnostic and prescriptive procedures was best utilized when it was compiled into an individualized educational plan for each student.

Remedial services, while not directly associated with counseling, were an integral support service in successful and exemplary programs. In some institutions remedial programs utilized a resource teacher who assisted trainees in any skill/knowledge/ability area in which the trainee needed additional assistance. In other institutions, academic teachers provided additional instruction in their skill areas to students who required specific subject matter remediation. Study analysis revealed that some type of remedial services were available in over half of the exemplary vocational programs.

Both administrators and instructors associated with the exemplary programs indicated that they considered their responsibilities to a trainee to extend beyond completion of the trainee's training and release. The responsibility also included job placement, a service that was often considered to be a continuation of the training process. However, despite this emphasis on the importance of job placement, just over half of the exemplary programs reported that their institutions had a job placement counselor. Moreover, most of those institutions that had a job placement counselor utilized a vocational counselor on a part-time basis to perform the job placement activities.

Among the institutions where a full-time job placement counselor was employed, the placement program often included the following activities. Companies were invited to send recruiters to campus to view the institution's training programs, including facilities, equipment, materials and instructors. The job counselor maintained close contact with employment agencies and regularly contacted their representatives shortly before each trainee finished a course; contact included information about the trainee and the trainee's availability for employment. In addition, the job counselor encouraged instructors and craft committee members to assist in placing students. Files were kept on all openings and potential openings for trainees and assistance was offered in matching the trainee and the position. Through this combination of procedures, the majority of trainees were placed upon release.

Follow-up procedures had been established and were operating in most exemplary programs. The impetus for follow-up emanated from either State departments of education, corrections or sometimes from individual prisons. Information obtained in follow-up studies often revealed solid program success. For example, in one state where the Department of Education required a one- and five-year follow-up, responses pertaining to the adult male institutions revealed that 40% of the 1976 graduates/releasees were employed in occupations for which they were trained, a respectable figure considering usual placement and follow-up rates for the target population being served.

Other periodic follow-up studies concentrated on topics such as the occupation of employment, the place of employment, the wages earned and degree of employee satisfaction. Comprehensive studies collected the demands and suggestions from businesses on possible program additions and deletions that would render the training program more applicable to the work environment. Occasionally, well-funded programs even made available the services of an after-care counselor upon release. The after-care counselor maintained periodic contact with the student and their employer. If the student or the student's family needed specialized social, educational or other services, the counselor guided the client to an agency able to serve his/her particular needs.

Job placement, like several other program variables, appeared to be particularly effective when operated in conjunction with a postsecondary vocational-technical program. These joint efforts afforded additional resources that could be utilized to place students. For example, such joint efforts produced arrangements in which additional employment contacts could be made, in which the placement services of the vocational-technical school could be utilized (often on a contract basis) and where student friendships later provided leads to a job.

Coordinated interagency programs also had a positive impact on job placement. For example, one such program operated as a clearinghouse of employment services for ex-offenders in a metropolitan area. By offering a range of services from counseling and health referrals to job referral and placement, the center was able to place a large percentage of ex-offenders on jobs, especially jobs related to their previous training and experience.

Priorities and Policy

The relative emphasis on vocational education within the exemplary programs was one major difference between exemplary and non-exemplary programs. While all program directors/instructors of programs usually felt that other considerations such as security were given prominence, most exemplary program personnel felt that their programs were relatively well supported by the institution and corrections system. Within exemplary programs themselves, instructors felt that their programs received comparatively high support from local program directors and corrections officials when compared to other programs.

In addition to support, exemplary programs also were characterized as programs with clearly articulated and written purposes, goals and objectives; further, there was a clear educational--not just correctional--program through which to achieve the goals and objectives. This does not imply that all goals and purposes were identical. However, there was similarity among goals of all exemplary adult level programs as well as similarity among goals of all juvenile level programs. Due to the short tenure of students in juvenile institutions, the program goals for most juvenile vocational programs were to develop the following: (1) basic work skills, (2) positive work habits, and (3) positive work attitudes.

In adult institutions, students were older and their sentences longer. In addition, students from adult institutions would more likely be entering the job market immediately upon release. For these reasons, the majority of adult institutions with exemplary programs appeared to have adopted the following three priorities for their vocational training programs: (1) preparing the inmate with job entry skills; (2) preparing the inmate for on-the-job training; and (3) preparing the inmate for entrance into a postsecondary vocational-technical program.

Agency Cooperation/Coordination

Interagency agreements, particularly ones that provide for a pooling of resources, were in use in a number of the exemplary programs. The most

comprehensive such agreement was a state level agreement that featured cooperative arrangements between the State agencies of Vocational Education, Corrections and Vocational Rehabilitation. This agreement provided for vocational rehabilitation and vocational education in both adult and juvenile institutions.

Coordination of these three agencies was directed by a committee composed of one representative from each agency. This interagency committee was scheduled to meet formally each month; the formal meeting was supplemented by informal, more frequent communication between committee members.

As part of this agreement, Vocational Rehabilitation provided funding to renovate buildings and buy equipment as well as provide for counseling and diagnostic evaluation. Vocational Education provided vocational instructors on a 50-50 funding basis with the Department of Corrections.

Program coordination and administration was provided by the Vocational Education agency through a Regional Director, a Regional Program Coordinator, and a Coordinator of the Vocational Education Center on-site at the institution. The vocational education training program in the institution was treated in the same manner as an area vocational center. Regional steering committees made decisions regarding programming within their regions. This organizational arrangement provided for correctional institution training programs to be an integral part of the regional network for vocational education.

In summary, these three agencies assumed the following responsibilities:

- 1) Initial establishment of a training program in a correctional institution--all three agencies.
- 2) Expansion--Vocational Rehabilitation.
- 3) Equipment--all three agencies.
- 4) Renovation--Vocational Rehabilitation.
- 5) Staff and Operation--all three agencies.

[Authors' note: Recent changes in federal legislation and implementing regulations pertaining to vocational rehabilitation programs and services

have necessitated renegotiation of such inter-agency agreements. The changing role and priorities of vocational rehabilitation have potential impact in all states for coordination of vocational education and related services to populations in correctional institutions.]

The majority of adult exemplary programs oriented their training program to postsecondary vocational-technical school programs such that the credits would transfer. Several juvenile institutions had oriented their programs to the area vocational schools or secondary vocational programs so that students could move directly into other vocational programs offered in the public schools.

As close as these associations were, many exemplary programs maintained even closer contacts with other institutions. Two-thirds of the programs obtained equipment and materials from community colleges, vocational-technical schools or area vocational education centers. Many exemplary programs operated programs in conjunction with local vocational-technical schools under an arrangement where the technical school provided the instructors, the correctional facility provided the equipment and reimbursed the school for the instructors' salaries, and the program graduates earned a certificate from the technical school.

Other cooperative training arrangements involved work-release programs. For example, one institution had established a work-release program with a nearby construction company. Inmates participating in the program lived at one of two correctional facilities and were transported to the work site. The coordination was arranged through the correctional facility, and was dependent upon meeting certain personnel standards for the construction company. Specifically, in order to be eligible for this particular program, the inmate had to have (1) completed the correctional institution's training program, (2) a clean disciplinary record, and (3) served a certain amount of his/her sentence. The result was a successful program for producing well trained and motivated workers.

Another important coordination activity utilized by many of the exemplary programs was the use of an advisory committee. Over two-thirds

of the adult level programs utilized vocational advisory and crafts committees. The overriding opinion, at the adult level, was that committees could be made to serve a significant benefit to the program in terms of (a) securing jobs; (b) securing needed equipment and materials; and, (c) improving the image of the program and facility. At the juvenile level, there was a recognized need for such committees; however, they were considered less critical than some other types of coordination because relatively few juveniles moved directly into paid employment.

Various other techniques for encouraging cooperation and coordination, particularly within the community, were employed within the exemplary programs. These included the following: (a) some institutions actively encouraged area businesses and industries to tour the facility and talk with personnel and participants; (b) in some centers facility members belonged to appropriate professional organizations and participated actively in them; (c) other institutions cultivated close relations with the media.

Representatives at several institutions reported that a newspaper article or a radio spot did a great deal to draw attention to positive aspects of the institution's training program.

Each of these techniques proved effective in encouraging the cooperation that was perceived to be essential to a well functioning program.

Evaluation

Most exemplary programs were found to have addressed the issue of providing for systematic evaluation of individual and programmatic aspects of the training program even though instructors and administrators perceived a need to strengthen such procedures. At the juvenile level, observation of student performance was clearly the most frequently used method of individual participant evaluation. Periodic grading throughout the program and non-paper-and-pencil achievement tests, such as demonstrated proficiency on a machine, also were employed frequently. Diagnostic ratings of skill areas, diagnostic ratings of attitude, written narrative progress reports and a grade at the end of the program were the least utilized evaluation methods.

At the adult level, as at the juvenile level, observation of inmate performance was the most frequently utilized means of performance evaluation. Other methods frequently used included periodic grading throughout the program, paper-and-pencil achievement tests, and grades on individual projects. Those indicators utilized less frequently included written narrative progress reports, diagnostic ratings of attitude, informal supervisory review and diagnostic ratings of skill areas.

In terms of course evaluation, some of the exemplary programs used job placement results as a measure of effectiveness, particularly when matched with labor market needs. However, even among the exemplary programs, relatively few institutions were able to determine what percentage of graduates, placed in their areas of training, constituted an adequate rate of course effectiveness. Unfortunately, many institutions did not maintain contact with students after parole and had no record of occupational choice or the relationship of their employment to their vocational training.

According to the directors of exemplary programs, the largest factor that contributed to the inability to measure course effectiveness through accurate job placement data resulted from lack of funding for adequate job placement and follow-up personnel.

There were several exceptionally effective course evaluation procedures in use in the exemplary programs. For example, one carefully designed and heavily funded program utilized a series of test results at the completion of the student's program coupled with pre-test information collected before the training program, in an attempt to measure course effectiveness. Pre-test data consisted of a thorough diagnostic evaluation, a segment of which was used to evaluate the student's academic level and his/her potential for improved educational performance. The tests utilized for these purposes included the California Achievement Test, the General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB), the Gates Reading Test, and the Math Placement Test. The same tests were administered three months later to students completing their training. When gain scores between pre-test and

post-test results were compared and when students registered gains, the program was considered to have been effective, even though the results were more academically than vocationally oriented.

Other programs used pre-test/post-test comparisons of grade point average in addition to measures on standardized instruments to evaluate training effectiveness. Still other programs utilized criteria based on performance of minimum skills by participants as the measure of program effectiveness. This relatively less expensive method proved to be effective at the several institutions in which it was used.

Several methods of course evaluation were relatively neglected, even among exemplary programs. These methods included evaluation by employer, advisory committees and participants. While the analyzed exemplary programs did not utilize these procedures, project staff undertook a modest survey of employer and participant evaluation of programs. Findings from the employer survey are reported in Volume I of this Final Report; in general, they suggest that most employers of completers of the exemplary programs are well pleased with their employees' performance. Employers indicated that completers were often more skilled than other beginning employees, had a good knowledge of the necessary equipment and got along well with other employees. The only negative comments were items such as noting a former inmate's occasional lack of maturity or determination to finish a job they had started.

Program participants were asked to evaluate how valuable they perceived the program to be to them. Over 90% of surveyed juveniles and over 96% of the surveyed adults indicated that the course had been either very valuable or valuable. Likewise, similar numbers of respondents indicated that they believed that the program would help them adjust to life on the outside. Less than 1% of either population perceived the course as relatively unbeneficial.

Facilities and Equipment

Modern, usable tools and equipment in good repair and sufficient amounts, together with a suitable place to use the equipment were basic to providing successful vocational training. In addressing this issue, questions concerning whether or not the instructor had his/her own shop or lab within the institution, the sufficiency of classroom instructional space, the use of all major tools and equipment needed for skill instruction, availability of raw materials and supplies in adequate amounts, the adequate repair of facility and equipment, and the sufficiency of printed/text materials were addressed.

Findings derived from data collected from adult and juvenile instructors revealed that they perceived their facility, tools and equipment to be adequate; however, there were some equipment and facilities related issues that received a more favorable evaluation than others.

Generally, all instructors were satisfied with classroom space, and the amount of tools, equipment and supplies. Further, adult instructors believed that their facilities and equipment were in adequate repair. Approximately one-third of the juvenile instructors expressed some dissatisfaction with the condition of their facilities and equipment. Adult instructors believed their supply of printed/text materials was adequate, while approximately one-half of the juvenile instructors were less satisfied.

Intake and Release Procedures

One element of successful programs was careful student selection. Each exemplary program operated under state or institutional requirements that defined the trainee selection process; however, within these broad boundaries it was found that administrators in many correctional institution vocational education programs considered it essential to be able to select students who they believed would benefit the most from the program; therefore, most exemplary programs utilized an even more stringent selection process.

The primary aspect of most selection processes utilized the results of the diagnostic and evaluation techniques discussed in a previous section. These results provided comprehensive information about each potential trainee and permitted the comparison of potential trainees with each other, with past norms and with specific criteria.

One particularly effective method of trainee selection was voluntary (self-referral) programs for incarcerated individuals. Further, when these programs were operated in conjunction with a vocational-technical center where inmates/offenders were treated as students rather than as inmates/offenders, the programs proved to be even more effective.

Most voluntary programs adhered to a basic procedure:

- 1) Students found out about vocational programs through the diagnostic and evaluation center.
- 2) If the potential trainee expressed particular interest in or volunteered for the program, they were interviewed by a representative of the institution sponsoring the program. The representative's role was to assess the interest and capabilities of the potential trainee as well as to explain program expectations and ascertain how well the individual might fit into the ongoing program. For the most part, to qualify for admittance the potential trainee had to meet the following requirements:

In most cases the individual

- a) had been a first offender;
- b) had not been committed for a crime against persons; and
- c) had scored well on tests given at the reception center.

In addition, attention was given to matching the individual's potential release date with expected completion date for the training program.

It is noted that intake procedures, selection criteria and admissions requirements functioned to serve as quality control measures for students in the programs. Often exemplary programs were serving only those students who were most likely to succeed.

Other intake and selection methods for courses were employed for some programs. Among the additional criteria used in the selection process for adults were student interest, length of sentence, and specific math, reading

or particular course aptitudes and/or achievements. Specific age of the incarcerated individual was cited least frequently of all mentioned criteria as a reason. Interest, specific age range, and math and reading aptitude were indicated most frequently as the criteria for selection for juvenile programs. Type of crime, length of sentence and open course entrance requirements were listed as the least frequent reasons for trainee selection in the juvenile programs.

Most administrators and program directors of voluntary programs espoused the philosophy that particular behaviors on the part of inmates/offenders had led them to incarceration; it therefore became the responsibility of the institutional program to change these inappropriate behaviors. It also required a maximum commitment from the individual. Thus, the voluntary programs were designed in a fashion that placed maximum responsibility for success on the trainee.

Release procedures also differentiated exemplary programs from less successful programs. The two critical issues related to release involved length of training program and specific release procedures. Study findings indicated that most juvenile trainees could remain in a course for an unlimited period of time, with flexible maximums and minimums. This was understandable since juvenile sentences were often for less time than it took to complete the course.

There were several juvenile and an increasing number of adult programs in which specified training extended until a satisfactory level of skill was achieved. This skill achievement notion was considered vastly superior to retaining inmates until the course formally ended. Attaining a satisfactory level of skill was by far the most important program related release requirement reported for adult programs. Given the more extended sentences for adult offenders and the fact that adult inmates would most likely be entering the labor market upon release, this would seem to be an appropriate criterion. Skill attainment was also reported to be far superior to specifying an unlimited time period or a course completion time frame, especially when tied to the second critical release issue--specific procedures.

Two specific release procedures were perceived to contribute to increased program success and post-release employment. The first of these procedures was work release. As practiced in the exemplary institutions, work release

was a measure that facilitated the following: (a) establishment/continuance of a fairly stable work history and work attitude or the inmate/offender; (b) refinement of existing skills and acquisition of new vocational skills; and (c) reintegration/readjustment into society before formal release. The procedure also was perceived to have side benefits such as permitting an inmate to continue financial assistance to their families and facilitating a reduction to incarceration costs.

Work release programs were highly similar and compared favorably with those described in the professional literature for corrections. Participants were employed in the surrounding community during the day, but returned to the correctional institution at night. Participants earned regular wages for their work; from these wages, they paid room and board to the correctional institution or release center as well as supported their families and/or saved money for their own use.

Variability in work release programs revolved around degree of supervision and amount and kind of support services integrated with the release program. Most work release programs were coordinated with or operated through pre-release centers that provided individual attention to the participants. Such attention included a range of services, such as personal and employment counseling, supervision, job leads, instruction in money management and coordination with parole or probation.

A second highly successful release procedure was the Mutual Participation or Mutual Agreement Program. This program, operated as a voluntary, incentive program, provided an opportunity for the inmate/offender to negotiate a contract for a specific release date. These programs functioned as structured goal-setting conferences that placed the responsibility for obtaining training and release on the inmate. The inmate/offender and a committee of officials representing corrections, training and probation or parole drew up a contract in which the program participant pledged to perform certain duties and to demonstrate certain skills and attributes in return for release on a specific date. After review of the agreement, it was signed by all parties and officials and became a legally binding contract. Participant progress was reviewed periodically by support

service personnel. If and when the objectives were achieved, the participant was released; if the contract was violated by the participant, officials could revise the contract. The participant retained the right to withdraw voluntarily at any time as well as the right to appeal after revision. Preliminary evaluation of this procedure has suggested that it holds promise for future use and development.

In summary, exemplary programs utilized specific in-take and release procedures which contributed to high in-program success and post-release employment. These procedures focused specifically on selection of program participants through diagnosis and evaluation and use of specific release procedures including mutual agreement/participation programs.

Characteristics and Perceptions of Program Participants

One variable repeatedly linked to success of exemplary programs was specific characteristics of program participants. The data suggested that certain participants realized more benefit from the exemplary programs than other participants. Specifically, exemplary programs tended to serve the better qualified, more likely-to-succeed portions of the prison populations. Other incarcerated individuals such as handicapped or severely disadvantaged individuals were less likely to be served in exemplary programs, even though they may have been more in need of the services.

In order to address the issue of characteristics and perceptions of program participants, project staff conducted individual interviews with eight to ten participants in each exemplary program. Both demographic and participation-related information was collected during each interview. Demographic findings revealed that the majority of juvenile participants in exemplary programs were 16 and 17 years old with relatively few participants at the extremes of age 15, 18, or 19 years old. Ages of adult participants varied from late teens through early 50's; however, 80% of the participants were in their 20's and only 2% were beyond the age of 40.

Findings pertaining to the educational level of individuals in exemplary programs revealed that while it exceeded the average for the incarcerated population, it was lower than the average educational level

outside prisons. For example, approximately 40% of the adult respondents had completed high school; 20% had completed less than the ninth grade equivalent. In addition, 10% of the adults had received one to two years of postsecondary high school training, primarily in two-year community colleges or trade/vocational schools. At the juvenile level, most of the participants in exemplary programs had completed the ninth grade and were on or close to chronological grade level with their peers.

Certain other socio-economic information, such as race, marital status, number of children and employment history were solicited from participants in exemplary programs. Between half and two-thirds of the participants in such programs, at both juvenile and adult levels, were white with the remainder being comprised of black, Indian, and Spanish-American individuals. In terms of overall prison populations, the program population figure was disproportionally skewed toward white populations.

As might be expected, relatively few, 5% of the juvenile participants, were either married or had children. Exactly 50% of the adult participants were single, one-third were married and the remaining percentage were divorced, separated, or widowed. While 45% of the respondents had no children, 30% had one child and 25% had more than one child.

The employment history of program participants proved revealing and suggested that previous employment might be an important personal variable in a highly successful program. Of particular interest during the study were length of employment, degree of full-time work and salary information. Findings revealed that 60% of the juvenile participants and 90% of the adult participants had been employed full-time. Further, the average length of employment on their last full-time job for juveniles was 10 months with a work history averaging 2-1/2 years of full-time and part-time work. Adults averaged 6 years and 4 months total work history, and 22 months full-time employment before incarceration. At the actual time of incarceration, approximately 40% of the juveniles were employed full-time, 40% were students and 20% were employed part-time or unemployed. For adults, approximately 58% were employed with 50% of the total employed full-time. Forty-two percent of the adults were unemployed.

Salaries of juvenile offenders who had been employed full-time at the time of incarceration reflected their youth and lack of education. Half had salaries ranging from \$100 to \$150 per week. Twenty percent earned more than \$150 per week and 30% earned less than \$100 per week.

Adult salaries were more varied but nevertheless were suggestive of the inmates' lack of skill training and pre-incarceration employment status. Over one-third of the adults had earned between \$81 and \$125 as their last weekly salary. Another 30% had earned between \$150 and \$200 per week. Only 10% of the participants had earned more than \$200 per week. At the other end of the salary range, 12% of the respondent inmates had earned \$80 per week or less before incarceration.

Incarceration history was another participant characteristic found to be significantly correlated to effective vocational training programs. Attention was directed to the number of times an inmate had been imprisoned, the charge the inmate had been imprisoned for, the minimum length of the inmate's sentence and the amount of sentence the inmate had already served.

Findings revealed that the average number of times each juvenile had been incarcerated was 2.3. For adult inmates, the average was 1.5. The juveniles had been incarcerated on a number of charges; however, few of the convictions involved crimes against persons. Instead, there was fairly even division among convictions for burglary, parole violations and drug charges.

Property crimes were also the major offenses of adult participants with 72% of the respondents having been convicted on burglary, theft, and robbery charges. The remaining adults were convicted on a variety of charges including approximately 8% for manslaughter, 10% for assault or rape and 8% for murder.

The minimum length of juvenile inmates' sentences averaged 8.2 months. For adults the average was 54.8 months or approximately 4.5 years. Juvenile inmates had already served an average of 3.5 months while adult inmates had already served an average of approximately 2 years.

Another important aspect of the study concerned the vocational training received by inmates while they had been institutionalized. Study attention was directed to the participants' vocational training background, the participants' daily course and work routine, the course the inmate was enrolled in, why the inmate was enrolled in that particular course, the instructional method utilized, where the course was taught, number of hours spent in class, whether or not the course included work experience or on-the-job training, whether or not the inmate received any job counseling, and the student's perception of how he/she had progressed in the course. Also of concern was the participant's overall assessment of the course, including suggestions for improving the course, methods of increasing inmate enrollement and the perceived value of the course in preparing the inmate for life after his/her release from prison.

In terms of vocational training before incarceration, juvenile inmates had received more training than their adult counterparts. Over half of the juvenile participants had taken one or more vocational courses while only 28% of the adult participants had received any form of vocational training before incarceration.

In terms of courses preferred and taken, findings revealed that adult and juvenile participants enrolled in a variety of courses. Auto mechanics, food services, welding, and upholstery had the highest enrollments as exemplary juvenile programs. For adults, construction trades and welding had the highest enrollments, followed by auto mechanics, small engines, upholstery and business and office.

Inmates noted several reasons why they were enrolled in a particular course. For juvenile inmates, being interested in the trade they were being trained for and learning a skill were the two most frequently mentioned reasons. Another important reason was that inmates had pre-incarceration experience in the trade.

The same pattern existed for adult inmates. Interest in the trade was, by a considerable margin, the most important reason for being enrolled in a particular course mentioned by inmates. Learning a skill and previous experience in the trade were other important reasons.

The programs that featured voluntary selection of courses, or at least some degree of flexibility were particularly well received. Approximately 40% of the juvenile programs and 50% of the adult programs featured this option. Many successful programs utilized counseling services at diagnostic/evaluation centers to assist with placement.

All juvenile inmate classes were taught within the institutions. Juveniles averaged approximately 4 hours a day in vocational training with the other 4 hours generally reserved for academic training.

Approximately 80% of the adult participants were taught in their respective institutions. Approximately 20% of them received their instruction at technical institutes with which the correctional facility had cooperative arrangements. Adult inmates, primarily because they had achieved higher levels of academic achievement due to being older, spent more time in vocational training than did juveniles--approximately 6 hours a day.

Half of the juveniles stated that their vocational program involved some work experience or on-the-job training, most of which was work experience related to various institutional improvement projects. No qualifications, other than being enrolled in class, were necessary for this work experience. One-third of the adult participants reported receiving either work experience or on-the-job training as part of their coursework. For these adults, being enrolled in class was the primary qualification for receiving this form of training; however, some programs also took into account parole dates and specific skills as requirements for this aspect of training.

Nearly all juvenile respondents indicated that they believed they were progressing well in their training. In fact, 95% reported that they were either doing very well or well. No one stated that he/she was not doing well in his/her coursework. Eighty-five percent of the adult respondents replied that they believed that they were doing either very well or well; while the remainder suggested that they were doing fair work, only one adult inmate reported doing poor coursework.

The study also attempted to determine inmates' overall assessment of the course. When asked how the course could be improved, 60% of the juvenile respondents replied that the course was satisfactory. For those who thought their course could be improved, 30% stated that the course needed better equipment and several trainees stated that their classrooms needed more space. Only three participants suggested that the instructor or the instructional technique could be improved.

Adults made more suggestions about ways that courses could be improved. While almost 30% of the respondents indicated that their courses were satisfactory, over 50% believed that the facility, space or training equipment could be improved. Thirty percent of the respondents felt that more effective instructional techniques could be implemented; 15% of the respondents complained of ineffective or a shortage of instructional materials, and 3% believed that instructional methods could be improved. Somewhat surprisingly, only one inmate registered a complaint against his/her instructor.

When participants were asked if their courses were filled to capacity, respondents indicated that their courses were full. Relatively few participants offered suggestions for increasing enrollments. Of those participants who offered suggestions, several felt that more flexible course entrance requirements, alternative instructional techniques, and more up-to-date equipment could be utilized to increase enrollment.

The report stated previously that a high percentage of inmates believed that the courses they were enrolled in were valuable to them. Eighty percent of adult respondents and 95% of juvenile respondents replied that the course had been either very valuable or valuable. None of the juvenile respondents and only three adult respondents reported that the course was not valuable.

The vast majority of students also believed that their courses were better preparing them for life upon release. Some 98% of juveniles and 95% of adults responded affirmatively to this question.

Instructor Characteristics and Perceptions

There were a number of shared characteristics and behaviors among the staffs of the exemplary programs which program directors and instructors perceived as contributing factors to success. For example, at the juvenile level, teaching situations in which the instructor combined counseling with individualized attention and teaching were believed to be highly contributory to program success. Within adult institutions, success appeared to be more highly related to the technical proficiency of the instructor than to any other characteristics.

Findings pertaining to educational and work background were highly similar for all instructors in exemplary programs. Virtually all instructors had directly relevant military/industrial or other work experience in the areas in which they taught; further, each held a vocational teaching certificate. Some had a background of working with disadvantaged and/or handicapped populations. A few had been required to take college level courses such as occupational analysis, development of instructional materials, methods of teaching, and development of vocational education in the U.S.

Instructors were encouraged to be aware of changing requirements and progress in their field. Continued in-service training was considered important within the exemplary programs and was a regular practice. In-service education was achieved through industry-sponsored seminars, field trips, use of current literature, workshop attendance, membership in professional/trade associations, and participation in formal training at the postsecondary level.

Instructor salary was considered somewhat less important than skills, behavior and background to successful programs; however, there was evidence that it may have contributed to overall staff morale. Findings revealed that in the exemplary programs, juvenile level instructors averaged approximately \$10,200 per year while adult level instructors were paid an average of \$10,500. When asked how their salaries compared with instructors

with similar backgrounds outside the institution, 10% of the adult instructors replied that they received a higher salary, 55% replied that it was lower and 35% stated that their salaries were comparable. Among juvenile instructors, 5% responded that his/her salary was higher, 55% stated that it was lower, and 40% reported their salaries as comparable.

Instructor perception of program operations was an important area of concern because it was believed to be directly related to morale. Of particular concern were questions of instructional problems and reasons for inmate/offender participation. Findings revealed that juvenile level instructors considered discipline to be their most significant instructional problem. Other problems included lack of cooperation on the part of prison officials, inadequate equipment, and lack of support personnel. Lack of visual aids, lack of textbooks and manuals, lack of diagnostic information, and lack of classroom/shop space were considered less significant problems.

Among adult instructors, lack of individualized instructional materials was considered the greatest problem. Other significant problems included lack of visual aids, lack of classroom/shop space, and lack of diagnostic information on students. Problems considered least significant included discipline problems which was considered the least significant problem by a wide margin, lack of support personnel, lack of job placement and follow-up, and inadequate equipment.

Interestingly, discipline was judged as the most significant problem to juvenile level instructors and the least significant problem to adult level instructors. Age and maturity of respective participant populations were undoubtedly a factor in this discrepancy. Logically, the great concern for support services such as counselors and a psychologist at the juvenile level was consistent with participant age/maturity and the discipline problem. At the adult level, the great concern for instructional materials and skill training related problems was logical, given the goals and expectations for these programs.

The question of why students were or were not participating in the exemplary programs was addressed to instructors in terms of both "institutional" and "participant" considerations. Interestingly, instructor

and participant perceptions about why inmates/offenders participated in the programs differed. As previously noted, both juvenile and adult program participants stated that interest in the trade and learning a skill were their primary reasons for taking vocational courses. On the other hand, both juvenile and adult instructors listed the inmates' desire to be with friends as the primary reason for participation. In addition, adult instructors reported that training was, or could lead to, a desirable work assignment in the institution, and that training as a means of shortening inmates' time to serve were other important reasons for enrollment. Instructors did not view interest in the trade and the desire to learn a skill as significant reasons for participation; instead, they perceived a relative lack of "enthusiasm-to-learn" on the part of the participant, although not the degree of apathy found among participants in other programs that were not viewed as exemplary.

Juvenile instructors listed consideration for early probation and a desirable work assignment within the institution, after participants' desire to be with friends, as primary reasons for program participation. As with adult instructors, the two reasons listed by inmates were not considered to be important reasons for participation.

Juvenile instructors cited lack of program openings as the primary institutional consideration for non-participation. Other significant considerations included insufficient space or facilities, insufficient materials, curriculum that was perceived to be ineffective and the fact that inmates/offenders were often assigned to other mutually exclusive tasks within the institution. With regard to offender/inmate considerations, lack of offender interest was, by a substantial margin, the most important reason cited by instructors for why offenders were not participating in vocational training programs. Other reasons for non-participation included the under-qualified nature of many offenders and inmate peer pressure against participation.

Lack of program openings was cited by adult level instructors as the most potent institutional consideration for non-participation. Insufficient funds and the usual short length of inmate sentences were also listed as

significant reasons. Insufficient materials, inappropriate curriculum and inadequate space or facilities were not considered institutionally significant reasons for non-participation. Interestingly, when adult instructors were listing the problems they encountered while teaching inmates, lack of individualized instructional materials and lack of classroom/shop space were given the highest priorities. In contrast, these items were not considered important reasons for lack of inmate participation in training programs.

Adult instructors were also asked to list inmate reasons for non-participation. Cited reasons included the fact that inmates were under-qualified; this was the primary reason for lack of inmate participation. Other significant reasons included lack of inmate interest and the inability of inmates to meet minimum academic requirements. The least significant reasons included peer pressure against participation and lack of priority/incentives as compared to other programs.

SUMMARY

A series of programmatic variables was found to contribute to and be correlated with successful vocational education in correctional institutions. These included instructional methods, in-take/release procedures, support services, course development, evaluation, facilities/equipment, policy, interagency coordination, program participant characteristics and instructor characteristics. As importantly, within each of these variables, certain techniques and procedures were found to be particularly effective in contributing to increased levels of in-program success and higher rates of post-release employment. While these are certainly not the only factors involved in developing and operating a successful correctional vocational education program, they can serve as a set of general suggestions for consideration by program administrators when planning new programs or revisions to current vocational offerings.

Appendix

KEY VARIABLES CHECKLIST

for

EFFECTIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

KEY VARIABLES CHECKLIST

for

EFFECTIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

	Yes	No
	_____	_____
I. <u>Course Development</u> : To increase effectiveness, course and program development should be coordinated with other agencies, reflect available manpower supply/demand data, and be congruent with interests of program participants.		
a. Does your program coordinate course or program offering changes (additions, deletions, modifications) with other training programs?	_____	_____
b. Are your training programs preparing graduates for occupations in which demand exceeds supply? Can this be demonstrated by hard data?	_____	_____
c. Do your course and program offerings reflect the training interests of inmates/offenders?	_____	_____
d. Does your program review changing manpower needs in determining whether to continue or discontinue ongoing courses and programs?	_____	_____
II. <u>Instruction</u> : Individualized instructional methodologies contribute to successful programs, especially when used in conjunction with other instructional methods.		
a. Does your program provide for individualized instruction that:		
1. allows each trainee to proceed at his/her own learning pace?	_____	_____
2. provides individual assistance to trainees?	_____	_____
3. outlines clear expectations for each trainee?	_____	_____
4. includes individualized testing and evaluation?	_____	_____
5. includes a written, individualized training plan for each student?	_____	_____
6. makes available needed support services, resources and remedial activities?	_____	_____
b. Is instruction through "live work" experiences available to trainees for direct skill application?	_____	_____
c. Are "hands on" opportunities available to supplement classroom instruction?	_____	_____

	Yes	No
	_____	_____
d. Are self-pacing texts, audio-visual materials, and other multi-media approaches employed in the provision of instruction to the trainees?	_____	_____
III. <u>Support Services:</u> Effective vocational education programs have available and utilize various types of support services to supplement the instructional program.		
Which of the following support services are available and used in your program:		
Psychological services?	_____	_____
Vocational counseling?	_____	_____
Remedial services?	_____	_____
Tutoring?	_____	_____
Community service agencies?	_____	_____
Diagnosis and evaluation?	_____	_____
Individual, personal counseling?	_____	_____
Diagnostic and prescriptive procedures?	_____	_____
Job placement services?	_____	_____
Follow-up procedures?	_____	_____
IV. <u>Priorities and Policy:</u> Institutional support and commitment to quality vocational education helps to insure a successful program.		
a. Does your program have the support and commitment of the correctional institution?	_____	_____
b. Does your program have clearly articulated and written purposes, goals and objectives?	_____	_____
V. <u>Agency Cooperation/Coordination:</u> Interagency cooperation and coordination, either through informal contacts or formal agreements, maximize resource utilization and increase program effectiveness.		
a. Does your program have agreements or good, close working relationships with:		
1. Vocational rehabilitation?	_____	_____
2. CETA training programs?	_____	_____
3. Area secondary vocational programs?	_____	_____
4. Area postsecondary vocational programs?	_____	_____

		Yes	No
		_____	_____
b.	Does your program share faculty, equipment and/or facilities with other vocational programs in the area?	_____	_____
c.	Does your program provide work-release opportunities with community institutions, agencies or businesses?	_____	_____
d.	Does your program have active vocational advisory and crafts committees?	_____	_____
e.	Does your program sponsor efforts to increase cooperation with community businesses and industries, and professional/trade organizations?	_____	_____
VI.	<u>Evaluation:</u> Exemplary vocational education programs provide for systematic evaluation of individual and programmatic aspects of the training program.		
	Does your program have procedures for:		
	a. individual evaluation?	_____	_____
	b. course evaluation?	_____	_____
	c. total program evaluation?	_____	_____
VII.	<u>Facilities and Equipment:</u> Modern tools and equipment in good repair and sufficient quantity, and a good facilities in which to use them, are basic to providing successful vocational training.		
	a. Does your program have adequate physical facilities and classroom space for all training areas?	_____	_____
	b. Does your program have adequate tools and equipment, in good repair and comparable to that used in business and industry, for all training areas?	_____	_____
VIII.	<u>Intake and Release Procedures:</u> Having specific intake and release procedures contributes to high in-program success and post-release employment.		
	a. Does your program have specific intake procedures that identify those students who would benefit most from the program?	_____	_____
	b. Is your program's trainee selection process voluntary?	_____	_____
	c. Does your program's selection process appropriately emphasize the responsibility for success on the trainee?	_____	_____

Yes No

d. Do your program's release procedures try to match the individual's prison release date with expected completion date for the training program?

e. Do your program's release procedures allow students to remain in training until a satisfactory level of skill is achieved?
